

THE QUIET HOUSE

Gareth Farr

To Florrie and Astrid for bringing the noise

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G.F.

Characters

JESS
 DYLAN
 TONY
 KIM

This text went to press before the end of rehearsals and so may differ slightly from the play as performed.

Scene One

Lights up. JESS and DYLAN's flat. It's comfortable and tidy. There is a window on the back wall and a front door leading to a lobby/hallway. The hallway has a flight of stairs leading up to other flats and a door leading out to the world.

JESS is sat on the sofa looking at her phone, she has been here for some time. She is dressed in nice underwear and silk dressing gown. She hears the door open in the hallway as DYLAN enters from the street. JESS jumps up, quickly sprays perfume and checks herself in the mirror as DYLAN enters the flat.

JESS. Hello, lover boy. I hope you are ready to make some babies tonight.

DYLAN *doesn't move.*

New undies, Dylan my lover. Brand spanking new and ready for you.

DYLAN *doesn't move.*

Dylan, I'm not very good at this and you're already over an hour late so can you please just –

DYLAN. Police.

JESS. What?

DYLAN. I've been with the police.

JESS covers herself with her dressing gown.

JESS. What? Jesus. Are you okay? What happened?

DYLAN *doesn't respond.*

What happened? Dylan?

DYLAN *doesn't respond.*

Dylan. What happened? You're scaring me, why have you been with the police?

DYLAN. Kids.

JESS. What?

DYLAN. Bloody children, Jess.

JESS. You're not making much sense, Dylan.

DYLAN. I went to the shop.

JESS. Right. Okay.

DYLAN. Yeah. Today's been a bit weird. I might just sit down.

JESS. Do you want a tea? Do you want a beer? Dylan? Love?
Do you want a beer?

DYLAN. No. Thank you.

JESS. Okay, so you went to the shop? Dylan, you went to
the shop?

DYLAN. I was going to get some cigarettes.

JESS. Cigarettes?

DYLAN. I know. Yeah. Sorry. I'm still smoking. A little bit. Not
many. It's hard, y'know?

JESS. We'll come back to the cigarettes, just tell me what
happened in the shop, Dylan.

DYLAN. It was the Indian woman.

JESS. What was? What about the Indian woman? What Indian
woman? Dylan?

DYLAN. She was sat there when I went in. I didn't notice. She
was just sat there and she was really still. Not moving, just
staring. I didn't notice. Sometimes it's the Indian man, I like
him, we chat. Sometimes it's their son, we chat too, about
the cricket mainly.

JESS. This sounds like a lot of cigarettes.

Sorry. Carry on.

DYLAN. It was the woman, the wife, the mum. She was sat there
behind the counter. We don't chat. She doesn't speak very
good English. I tried once but it didn't work. She didn't like it.
Rude actually, she was actually openly quite rude about it.

JESS. What happened in the shop, Dylan?

DYLAN. I could tell something was wrong. I didn't know that
I knew but looking back now, I know that I knew. Does that
make sense.

JESS. Sort of.

DYLAN. Something wasn't right. An energy, I don't know, like
an atmosphere, y'know?

JESS. Yes, I think so. Go on.

DYLAN. I wasn't really paying attention. I was distracted
because of everything that's going on, y'know? And we had
this huge meeting at work so my head was full. I just wasn't
looking. I just asked for the cigarettes.

JESS. Then what?

DYLAN. Kids, Jess. It's unbelievable.

JESS. What kids?

DYLAN. She was just sitting there staring over my shoulder at
the back of the shop. My head was full because of the meeting
and everything else so I was a bit short with her. I just said,
'Oi. Look sharp. Twenty Marlboro Lights.' I'm pretty sure that
I didn't even say thank you. Terrible that, isn't it? Because of
everything that's going on, Jess. It must be.

JESS. Okay.

DYLAN. And the meeting. She didn't say anything. She didn't
even move. She hadn't moved from the moment I walked in.
She was just still, really, properly still and staring at the back
of the shop. Just staring. I just didn't notice. And then I heard
something. I heard something or I saw something move
behind me. I don't know. I turned round to where the woman
was staring. I followed her stare. Jesus Christ.

JESS. Carry on. Dylan.

DYLAN. There was a group of boys. Kids. Some boys at the
back of the shop all huddled up near the washing powder.
I hadn't noticed them before. You don't look, do you? Not
unless you need to. So strange what your head does. Do you
know what I thought in that moment? I thought, we need
washing powder. Because they were near the washing powder.

I thought, should I get some now? Then I thought I'll wait until the weekend and get it at the supermarket. Cheaper and I can't go to the meeting with a box of washing powder, can I? I had all of those thoughts in that moment. Idiot.

JESS. Dylan.

DYLAN. I am. That's what I am.

JESS. You're not. You're just...

DYLAN. What?

JESS. Nothing. Stressed. A bit stressed maybe. Carry on.

DYLAN. She still hadn't moved, the Indian woman. She still hadn't moved an inch since I walked in and I don't know why I did this but I started to shout at her. I was shouting, saying,

'Oi, come on! Oi! I just want some fucking cigarettes please.'

I swore, Jess, I said, 'Fucking cigarettes!' to her face and then I said, 'I've got to get to a meeting. Not all of us have got the whole day to just sit around.' Bad that. Is that racist?

JESS. No.

DYLAN. Borderline.

JESS. Not really.

DYLAN. One of them broke away. One of the boys came close to me. He was young. Sixteen maybe. About fifteen or sixteen I don't know. He was really close, I could smell his breath, like sweets, he was eating sweets. He was chewing on something sweet as he was talking to me. Very quiet and very soft he was just saying, 'She's fine. She's okay. Just leave her alone.' That's what he kept saying, 'Just leave her alone. Just leave her.'

He had his hands on me, I thought he was trying to steal my phone but he wasn't, he wasn't taking anything out of my pockets, he was stuffing things into them. It was so weird. Things from the shelves, he was stuffing cigarettes into my pockets. He was up close still, almost like he was hugging me but he wasn't hugging me, he was leaning over the counter and he was stuffing things from the shelves into my

pockets and he just kept saying, 'Just leave her alone. It's cool. Just leave her alone.' I remembered his hand.

She still wasn't moving, just staring, her eyes hadn't moved.

I saw his hand grabbing things off the shelves, he was so close I could smell him but I remember seeing his hand out of the corner of my eye. That's how they caught him. He had a tattoo of a monkey. I remembered it. This blue, weird monkey tattoo on his hand. I told the police about it and that's how they found him. Just him. They didn't find the others. He was known to them.

JESS. You've jumped a bit.

DYLAN. What?

JESS. You were in the shop and he was stuffing things into your pockets and now you're talking about the police. How did you get out of the shop?

DYLAN. I just left. It was all so quick. I must have been a bit confused because I just left and went straight into the meeting. I was sat in the meeting and I had sweets and cigarettes in my pockets, loads of them all bulging in my pockets. Some fell on the floor. It was then that it hit me and I said that I needed to call the police. I just said it and walked out. Sweets on the floor.

Beat.

She was already dead. Heart failure. They hadn't killed her. I was worried that they'd killed her, that's what I thought but they hadn't.

JESS. Right. Okay. Well, that's good.

DYLAN. Is it?

JESS. No. It's not good that she died but good they hadn't killed her, good that it was natural. It's something.

DYLAN. Can you believe that I didn't even notice? Pathetic.

JESS. You've had a shock.

DYLAN. They asked me to carry on.

JESS. Who?

DYLAN. Work. They asked me to see the police in my own time.

JESS. Right.

DYLAN. I said no.

JESS. Good for you.

DYLAN. But they kicked off a bit so I said yes.

JESS. Right.

DYLAN. That's why I'm late. I gave a description over the phone, went back to work and I went to the station on the way home. A woman died and I went back to work. Jesus. Unbelievable that, isn't it?

JESS. You did what you had to do.

DYLAN. I gave a statement but they'd already caught him. They'd caught him, charged him and let him go by the time I got there. Shoplifting sweets that's all they did him on.

JESS. Right.

DYLAN. I still had the cigarettes. I stole more than the kid did. They didn't charge me though.

JESS. No. Good. That's good. Dylan, we need to –

DYLAN. So I want to leave work. I want to resign.

JESS. You can't that's ridiculous.

DYLAN. Is it? There's no compassion, Jess.

JESS. We are trying for a family, we are going to need your wage, Dylan. It's just not possible.

DYLAN. I just left her there with those boys while I went back to work.

JESS. It was a heart condition. You couldn't have done anything for her.

DYLAN. Boys though, Jess. Children.

JESS. Dylan.

DYLAN. You know what I'm saying, don't you?

JESS. What? Yes. No actually. What are you saying?

DYLAN. Children, Jess.

JESS. And?

DYLAN. That's what they do. That's how they behave.

JESS. Jesus Christ, Dylan.

DYLAN. What?

JESS. Nothing. Can we just... I'm wearing new –

DYLAN. It's the state of things, Jess.

JESS. I get it.

DYLAN. Do you?

JESS. Yes. Of course I do.

DYLAN. Good.

JESS. It's bullshit though.

DYLAN. Is it? Is it really?

JESS. Yes.

DYLAN. Why is it bullshit?

JESS. Because it is.

DYLAN. Well, that's properly, thoroughly detailed.

JESS. It's isolated. I know what you're saying and it's totally unbalanced. This isn't what children do.

DYLAN. It's not bullshit, Jess. It's blatantly clear and it is what they do because I saw them do it.

JESS. I don't want to argue. We need to... tonight... it's –

DYLAN. It's not bullshit, Jess! I was there.

JESS. I know.

DYLAN. That is exactly what children do these days. They leave dead women to rot in their own faeces for a packet of sweets. It's savage. She'd shit herself and she was dead and they took that to mean free sweets. There's no compassion in this world, there's just desperate, fucking, evil. We can't add to that, Jess, it's not right, it's fucking wrong actually, it's immoral. We can't.

JESS. Okay. Let's just try and keep a bit of perspective, Dylan.
 A woman died. Not women, it's not happening en masse. It's not the end of days out there. A woman, singular, died. That's sad. Some kids saw that as an opportunity to steal some sweets. That's sadder and extremely, massively unusual. Jesus, there are any number of good, honourable, charitable acts going on right now, being performed by adults, children, bloody animals, right outside that door. It's about what you choose to look at. You called the police, Dylan, you cared about it, you got upset about it and that's good. You are good. We are both nice, good people. Our children will be the product of us, we will teach them and educate them about doing the right thing, just like you did. I'll tell them this story. I doubt they'll believe it but we can try.

DYLAN. What if we don't though? What if we have evil ones? Fucking bad ones like Jack the Ripper or something.

JESS. Dylan. Can you please come back to reality so that we can have sex please?

DYLAN. I just think we should think about it some more.
 Maybe all this failure is a sign. Maybe, I dunno. It's stressing me out though, Jess. Badly.

JESS. I know. We're struggling. It's tough for us at the minute.
 But we have tonight, it might work tonight.

DYLAN. I can't tonight.

JESS. We have to.

DYLAN. I can't. No way. I'll just keep seeing the dead woman.
 I know I will.

JESS. We have to.

Beat.

You're in shock but you can't use this as a get-out clause to what we're doing, Dylan. We are trying for a family and it's not easy but just because you're scared or whatever, you can't find excuses where there aren't any.

DYLAN. I can't use it as a get-out clause, I can't find excuses, I can't leave work, I can't resign, I definitely can't go in that shop again. I can't...

He stops himself.

We can't have...

He stops himself.

I can't even say the words. I'm surrounded by 'can't', Jess. Living in it.

JESS. I know. I know.

Silence. Stillness. The mood settles.

I love you.

DYLAN. Thanks.

JESS. It's alright, it's true.

They smile.

It's time.

DYLAN. Is it really?

JESS. Yeah. Tonight. Well, round about now actually.

DYLAN. Right. Really? Jesus, that's precise.

JESS. Yeah, it's the monitor thing. It's probably quite close to now.

Sorry.

DYLAN. Don't be sorry. Don't say that. I'm sorry. I've had a weird day. I'm talking rubbish. You're sure it's now?

Beat.

JESS. Yeah. Sorry.

Pause.

I love you. You did a very good thing today in a very tough situation that went a bit weird. But you're here now, with me, and I've got new underwear on and it's lovely and it's new and really quite expensive, so...

DYLAN. Okay. Right. Fair enough.

Right.

Let's do some sex then.

Scene Two**Some days later**

JESS sits and looks into space. We watch her do this for some time. We get the feeling that she is going to talk. She is just about to talk to someone who isn't there when the door to the lobby area opens and KIM enters with a pram. Her baby is crying. The noise fills the space. It penetrates JESS's flat. It penetrates JESS. The noise lasts as KIM carefully takes the baby out of the pram and exits upstairs. The crying fades.

Silence.

Scene Three**Some weeks later**

JESS enters from the bedroom. She is dressed in a nightie and warm socks. She crosses and exits into the bathroom. DYLAN enters behind her from the bedroom and sits on the sofa. He waits. After some time she re-enters from the bathroom.

DYLAN. Alright?

JESS. Nope.

DYLAN. Is it... y'know?

JESS. My period, Dylan? You can say it. Yes it is my period.

Beat.

DYLAN. Right. Shit. I'm sorry.

Pause.

JESS. Not fair, is it?

DYLAN. No.

JESS. Not fair. It's just not fair.

DYLAN. What can I do?

JESS. Get me some Tampax from the shop.

DYLAN. Sure. Leave it to me. I love buying Tampax. It makes me feel like a man.

He moves to her. Tentatively he holds her. She resists for a second but then lets him.

I love you.

JESS. Why?

DYLAN. I don't know. I just do.

They smile sad smiles and hold each other. They have strength together.

KIM enters through the main entrance of the flats. She is struggling to get through the door with a pram and armfuls of shopping. She drops everything, picks Emma up out of the pram and knocks on DYLAN and JESS's door. DYLAN answers it.

How are you?

KIM. Absolutely fucked. I haven't slept, I haven't eaten, I haven't washed. Phil is at work and I haven't pissed once today. I mean it's fucking inhumane. Can you hold her while I run for a wee? I can't hold it any more. I'm dying, like literally properly getting piss-poison or something.

DYLAN takes the baby as KIM rushes into their flat and to the toilet.

Hiya!

JESS. Hi!

KIM. I'm going to piss in my pants any second.

JESS. I heard.

She exits into the bathroom. Silence as JESS looks at DYLAN holding Emma.

DYLAN. Are you okay?

JESS. Yeah. Fine.

DYLAN. Do you want to hold her?

JESS. No.

DYLAN. Jess.

JESS. No.

He crosses and carefully passes the baby to JESS. She takes her. She holds Emma for some time. KIM re-enters.

KIM. Unbelievable. I have never felt like this in my life.

I haven't had a haircut since she was born. Can you believe that? Four months! I don't go out, I don't see anyone, I piss in other people's toilets. Not even toilets. I piss where I can these days. I piss in bushes, I piss in parks, I piss in people's gardens. I did a piss behind a charity shop yesterday. Can you believe that? I couldn't help it. The Salvation Army. I mean that's rude isn't it?

So thanks for the use of your lavatory, it was lovely. I actually thought it was coming out as I was running down the street. I have no pelvic floor. Nothing! Years I did those exercises and nothing. Sorry, Dylan, graphic. Right, let's get you back upstairs for a feed.

She takes Emma out of JESS's arms. JESS is left empty-handed, she doesn't know what to do with her hands for a second.

Come up tonight. We'll cook. We haven't seen you for ages.

DYLAN. Sure, when's Phil back?

KIM. Not until seven but I'll need another piss in about four hours. Come up then. I'll put the kettle on. Bye.

She leaves, taking Emma and bags upstairs. JESS and DYLAN's house becomes quiet and still.

There is silence.

DYLAN. When's the appointment?

JESS. Tuesday at four.

DYLAN. Right.

JESS. Can you be there?

DYLAN. Sure. It's happening then? We're getting help?

JESS. Yes. We're getting help.

Scene Four

Some days later

DYLAN's office. DYLAN sits and looks out of the window. He is still. Breathing. TONY enters. DYLAN is startled out of his thoughts.

TONY. Dylan.

DYLAN. Shit.

TONY. Alright, mate?

DYLAN. Yeah.

TONY. You sure?

DYLAN. You didn't knock.

TONY. What?

DYLAN. Nothing.

TONY. What?

DYLAN. I was just –

TONY. What?

DYLAN. Thinking.

TONY. Right.

DYLAN. You didn't knock.

TONY. No. Sorry. Is this a bad time, mate?

DYLAN. If you'd have knocked then I would have known.

TONY. Known what?

DYLAN. That you were there.

TONY. Right. Obviously.

DYLAN. I would have been busy.

TONY. I'm not sure – Are you okay?

DYLAN. Yeah. I was just miles away. Sorry.

TONY. Do you need a cuddle?

DYLAN. What?

TONY. A hug, not a cuddle, a hug do you need a hug? They reckon it helps.

DYLAN. With what?

TONY. I don't know, stress, whatever. I had to go on this course about alternative management strategies. It was all part of the promotion. Scandinavian or something. I wasn't really listening but they love it. They're at it all the time. Hugging. It improves company yield apparently. Yield, like we're a farm or something.

DYLAN. Right.

TONY. Do you want a hug?

DYLAN. No.

TONY. Good. Because I asked Rita last week and she went to HR about it. Violation of personal space or something. It's a minefield, Dylan.

DYLAN. I was just thinking.

TONY. Good. Probably best you stop that and start *doing* though because there are fourteen reports coming your way this afternoon, one from each department. Gordon's just emailed. Cranking it up over this Spanish contract of yours. He needs them read and responded to by Wednesday. Overtime, Dylan, book it in it's fine, take them home with you, whatever, but Wednesday morning is the return, signed, sealed delivered I'm yours. Thought I'd let you know. Heads-up and all that. All good?

DYLAN. Fine.

TONY. Sure?

DYLAN. I'll do it. No problemo. Tell him to fire them over.

TONY. Awesome. Beer tonight?

DYLAN. No chance.

TONY. What? Why not?

DYLAN. I've got fourteen reports to review.

TONY. Wanker. I'll have to go with the others now.

DYLAN. Sorry.

TONY *goes to leave.*

Oh. Tony. I need some time off.

TONY. What?

DYLAN. I need some time off. Tomorrow.

TONY. Sure. Is it in the log?

DYLAN. No.

TONY. Right. It needs to be in the log.

DYLAN. I know. It's last-minute. I just need tomorrow off.

TONY. Why? Sorry. I'm not actually allowed to ask that, that's why we have the log. It's called company openness. Stops us asking personal questions but instead allows people to read your personal information in a computer file. Makes no sense but it works.

DYLAN. It's the hospital.

TONY. Right. Sure.

Beat.

Is everything okay?

DYLAN. Yeah. It's nothing.

TONY. Okay. But you're going to the hospital?

DYLAN. Yeah.

TONY. None of my business. Forget the log, nobody uses it anyway. That's not true, everyone uses it. But don't worry, Dylan, just take the day off.

DYLAN. It's Jess.

TONY. Right.

DYLAN. She needs an operation.

TONY. Okay. Shit, is she okay?

DYLAN. Yeah. No, she's fine, it's nothing major but I need to be there. Y'know, they make you bring someone. I'm the someone. That's all.

TONY. Right. Of course, mate. That's fine then.

DYLAN. Thanks.

TONY. Anytime. Give her a kiss from me. Not a kiss, a cuddle, a fucking hug, whatever.

DYLAN. Thanks.

Beat.

TONY. Take the reports with you if you can?

DYLAN. The reports? Yes. Of course.

TONY. I mean, if you can.

DYLAN. I can.

TONY. It's just Gordon. He'll pick it apart if it's not done and he'll look at why it didn't happen and days not accounted for and the log and –

DYLAN. I will. I'll take them.

TONY. I can take some off you if you need me to.

DYLAN. I don't, mate, it's fine.

TONY. Cool. Sure?

DYLAN. They'll get done. I promise.

TONY. Excellent.

I'll send them now.

DYLAN. No worries.

TONY *exits*. DYLAN *stands*. *He takes a deep breath.*

Scene Five

A week later

JESS *is sat at her table typing on her laptop. She is working. It is focused and energetic and real. She is listening to music on her headphones as she types. Her phone rings.*

JESS. Hi, Samantha... I'm working on it now... Yeah, I'll have it to you within the hour... I like it but then I would... Well, let's hope so... I'll see you next week but let me know your thoughts when you've read it... I know, bye.

The doorbell rings. JESS continues to write, unwilling to break her focus. The doorbell rings again. Another doorbell rings, fainter, upstairs. After a beat KIM comes down the stairs. She opens the door and takes the delivery. She glances at the label briefly, a tiny beat as she does this. She knocks on JESS and DYLAN's door. JESS's concentration is broken. She crosses and opens the door.

Hi.

KIM. Hi. I took a delivery. Is your doorbell broken?

JESS. Thanks. No. I was working.

KIM. Oh. It's just that Emma's asleep.

JESS. Is she?

KIM. I mean you could have answered.

JESS. I was in the middle of something. Sorry.

KIM. You need to call them and confirm you've got it.

JESS. I will, thanks. How are you?

KIM. I'm good. How's things?

JESS. Good. Working. How's Emma?

KIM. She's asleep for once.

JESS. Great.

Beat.

KIM. It's nice to see you.

JESS. You too.

KIM. Is everything okay?

JESS. Fine.

KIM. Sure?

JESS. Yeah.

KIM. I just haven't seen you for a while, Jess.

JESS. No. I've been busy. We both have. Work's a nightmare at the minute. Deadlines. You know how it is.

KIM. I can't wait to get back to work. Get some normality back, y'know? I feel like my life's been turned on its head. I keep crying for no reason. Is that normal?

JESS. I don't know.

KIM. Phil hasn't changed. He hasn't noticed it but I have. It's difficult, y'know?

JESS. Yeah.

KIM. So, everything's okay then?

JESS. Everything's fine. Thanks for taking the delivery. Sorry for waking Emma.

KIM. You didn't, it's fine. Come up some time, we'll cook.

JESS. Great. I'll check with Dylan.

KIM. Okay.

JESS. Bye then.

KIM. Bye.

KIM exits. JESS closes the door and opens the box. We watch her unpack box after box of drugs. They fill the table, burying her work.

Scene Six

That evening

JESS and DYLAN sit at their kitchen table. In front of them are two vials of the stimulant Merional, three vials of the stimulant Fostimon. Each has a water vial for mixing and needles next to them. There is also a pre-loaded syringe of the synthetic hormone Buserelin.

They stare at the drugs as the size of what they are about to do hits them.

DYLAN. Are you okay?

JESS. I think so. There's just a lot of it.

DYLAN. And we do this every night, right?

JESS. Yeah.

DYLAN. For six weeks?

JESS. About that, yeah. Until the trigger shot.

DYLAN. Where's that?

JESS. In the fridge with all the rest of it. There's no room for the milk, I had to throw it away.

DYLAN. Right. Shall I do it then?

JESS. I need music. If this is how we are making a baby, I need music.

JESS crosses to the stereo and puts music on, 'Let's Get it On' by Marvin Gaye plays. She does a flirty, sexy dance. It's light and fun. They smile.

DYLAN. My hands are shaking.

DYLAN fixes a large drawing needle onto the end of a syringe.

Right, so now we need to fill this with water right?

JESS. Yeah.

He draws water from one water vial into the syringe.

DYLAN. And we mix it with this.

He plunges the water from the syringe into one vial of powdered Merional. This turns the powder into a fluid.

Then we draw it up and plunge it into this one.

He draws up the mixture and plunges into a second vial of Merional powder.

Then we draw this up and that's the first one, right?

JESS. Air bubbles.

DYLAN. Air bubbles.

DYLAN takes off the large drawing needle and replaces it with a small one. He taps to get rid of the air bubbles and passes it to JESS. She takes it, checks for air bubbles herself and...

Ready?

...She inserts the needle into her stomach. Once it's in, DYLAN moves to her side and plunges the fluid. She removes the needle and they put it into a sharps box.

They look at each other.

They kiss.

JESS. This is how our baby is made.

DYLAN. It is.

He repeats the process for the Fostimon. They don't speak to each other again as the lights fade. The music continues to play.

Scene Seven

The next day

JESS is sat in the flat. She is alone. She starts to talk to someone who isn't there.

JESS. Hello.

She stops herself.

Hello.

Erm. I've had this thought.

She stops herself and becomes very aware of what she is doing. She struggles with it for a moment and then starts again.

I've had this thought and I haven't told anyone which is why I am telling you. It sounds crazy, maybe it is, maybe I am. Maybe I am totally shot away. I don't know. So what if I am.

Anyway, whatever, I've started now and it's... well, I've had this thought and I thought I would maybe, I don't know, I thought I might tell you.

I suppose that is the thought really.

I thought I might try talking to you.

Like, include you maybe. I don't know. I thought I might try to imagine you. I do that. I imagine you a lot and it's started to get so real that I thought I'd like to talk to you. Because I'm a bit weird like that and I'm probably totally mad but I know you. I know you. I do. I know you so very well. I know your presence and I know your movements, some of them. I know the random movements your hands make and your breathing, I hear it sometimes and it catches me, y'know? It catches me here.

She holds her chest.

I know you. You. Your personality and I know your sense of humour. I do. I know your love. I do. I do know that. I know your love and I will know your face. I will know your voice. I will. I will know your energy and your noise and I promise I will bring you here. I wanted to say that to you. I suppose

that's what I really wanted to say. That's why I really wanted to talk to you. I wanted to make that promise to you out loud. I promise I will bring you here and I promise I will be everything you need. I promise I will be everything you need. Because you are that to me. You are absolutely everything I need and I will bring you here. I will do that.

I will bring you here.

Scene Eight

That next evening

Music plays. JESS and DYLAN repeat the injections procedure from Scene Six. There are now three vials of Merional, three vials of Fostimon and one of Buserelin. They are slightly more relaxed. JESS stands and watches as he carefully mixes the drugs.

JESS. You're going to be amazing.

DYLAN. Going to be? I already am. Look at me.

JESS. As a dad.

The word catches him. He stops.

DYLAN. Oh. Yeah. Bloody hell. Dad.

JESS. You're going to be so good at it.

DYLAN. You think so?

JESS. I do.

DYLAN. So are you... mum, obviously. We're both going to be brilliant. We are going to be the awesomest family ever.

JESS. But you though. You're going to be so good. I just saw it. I just had a flash.

DYLAN. Thanks.

JESS. It's okay.

DYLAN. I worry that I might drop it.

JESS. Please don't say that.

DYLAN. Sorry. Just random worries. I have them about loads of things.

JESS. Right. Remind me not leave you on your own with it. Ever.

DYLAN. Are you ready for me to stab you with this?

JESS. Let's do it.

JESS uses ice to numb the area of injection. DYLAN checks for air bubbles. He passes it to her. She checks. She injects and he plunges. The music plays. They kiss.

Scene Nine

Some days later

DYLAN's office. He is sat reading a report. TONY enters and shouts.

TONY. Barcelona!

DYLAN jumps.

DYLAN. Jesus.

TONY. Get yourself some new Speedos, Dylan, because it's you. You're off! Fucking jet set. Lucky bastard.

DYLAN. What?

TONY. We need someone to go to Barcelona for a meeting with the clients. Couple of meetings, a travel day either side. Cushty. Hot out there, Dylan, hot and good and not here.

DYLAN. When?

TONY. Thursday.

DYLAN. This Thursday?

TONY. Ruby can't go. It was meant to be Ruby but she's got an audit that's just come in so she needs to stay here and count numbers. I wouldn't mention it to her if I were you, she's

guttled. Flights for the boyfriend all booked and paid for. One of those non-refundable tickets. They were making a long weekend of it. But now it's you, mate. They want you, Dylan. First in line, mate.

DYLAN. What about Ruby?

TONY. After Ruby obviously.

DYLAN. Right.

TONY. Are you alright?

DYLAN. Yeah, fine.

TONY. It's just that you don't look particularly happy about having an all-expenses-paid trip to somewhere really nice.

DYLAN. I don't think I can go though, mate.

TONY. What? You have to?

DYLAN. Really?

TONY. Well yeah, sort of.

DYLAN. I've got too much on here. Sorry.

TONY. Too much what?

DYLAN. Work.

TONY. Take it with you.

DYLAN. I've got... y'know like Ruby... too much. It's imminent, mate. I'm up against it here.

TONY. Take it with you. Quiet time at the airport, two-hour flight, clear the backlog. You'll get more done there than you will do here; me barging in every five minutes.

DYLAN. It's not great timing for me.

TONY. How do you mean?

DYLAN. Just stuff, it doesn't matter.

TONY. Right okay. I don't really know what to do now.

DYLAN. Why?

TONY. Well, it sort of has to be you. There's only you and Ruby on the Spanish project. You have the details of the gig. I could take it off you but it'll take me months to get up to speed. I would if I could, mate, seriously but, I dunno... It was always a possibility when we went for this contract. You knew that. It's two days of meetings and a conference. Two days, mate.

Beat.

DYLAN. Can I let you know?

TONY. I don't know. Erm, shit, no not really.

Sorry. It was always a possibility, Dylan mate.

DYLAN. I know. Yeah. It's fine. I'll go. I just have to move some things around. It's fine, I'll be there.

TONY. Yeah? There's probably a little bit of cash in it for you if you want me to check?

DYLAN. Of course. That'd be amazing. Sorry, just trying to work stuff out in my head.

TONY. Great. I've emailed you the tickets. They should be in your inbox now. Can you let me know that the details are all correct?

DYLAN. Yeah. No worries.

TONY. Excellent. Enjoy. Let me know how it goes.

TONY *exits.*

Scene Ten**That evening**

JESS *and* DYLAN *'s flat. JESS is sat, DYLAN paces.*

DYLAN. So we settled on five per cent and I'll be away for two nights.

JESS. That's good. Well done.

DYLAN. Do you think?

JESS. Yeah, don't you?

DYLAN. I suppose so. I don't know. I feel like I should have pushed for more.

JESS. Do you deserve more?

DYLAN. What does that mean?

JESS. It means do you deserve more than five per cent?

DYLAN. I work hard.

JESS. I know. Do you deserve more than five per cent?

DYLAN. Probably not.

JESS. Then take it. It's a bonus, Dylan. It's a good thing. We need good things at the minute.

DYLAN. What about the injections though?

JESS. I'll do them myself.

DYLAN. Really?

JESS. Other people do it.

DYLAN. It feels weird.

JESS. It's two nights, it's fine. If I freak out I'll drive over to the clinic and get someone to help me inject. This is a good thing, Dylan. We should celebrate.

DYLAN. Fair enough. Alcohol-free beer?

JESS. Please.

DYLAN *gets two non-alcoholic beers from the fridge. As he opens the fridge we can see boxes of drugs.*

Did you tell him?

DYLAN. Tell him what?

JESS. You know what.

DYLAN. No.

JESS. Why not?

DYLAN. I don't know. It's none of their business.

JESS. You should tell him, he's your friend.

DYLAN. It feels weird.

JESS. Tell HR then.

DYLAN. They'll tell him.

JESS. So? Do it.

DYLAN. I don't want to.

JESS. You're going to have to tell them at some point.

DYLAN. It'll be fine.

JESS. It's not going away, Dylan. You'll need time off.

DYLAN. I'll just tell them you're having another operation. I'm pretty sure they think it's cancer.

JESS. Jesus, Dylan!

DYLAN. What?

JESS. It isn't cancer.

DYLAN. I know. I didn't say anything, they just assumed.

JESS. You don't need to hide this.

DYLAN. I'm not hiding it. I'll tell them when they need to know.

JESS. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

DYLAN. I'm not ashamed.

JESS. That's okay then.

Beat.

Kim knows.

DYLAN. What?

JESS. I think she does, I'm not sure but she took the delivery.

DYLAN. What?!

JESS. She signed for the box the other day. She must have seen that it was from the hospital. It had ACU on the stamp.

DYLAN. Jesus.

JESS. What?

DYLAN. It's fucking private, Jess.

JESS. Calm down. I didn't tell her.

DYLAN. Cheeky bitch looking at our post. Just leave it on the mat like any normal person.

JESS. It was a delivery, they rang the doorbell.

DYLAN. Will she know what ACU means?

JESS. She'll check, she was weird. Calm down.

DYLAN. Why do they put ACU on the box? They need to consider the reputation of the patient. Isn't this breach of patient confidentiality or something?

JESS. The reputation of the patient?

DYLAN. You know what I mean.

JESS. Is this potentially damaging to your reputation?

DYLAN. Not mine but it could be to some people.

JESS. It's you that's getting shirty though, Dylan.

DYLAN. I didn't mean reputation. I got the wrong word. Sorry.

JESS. Then what did you mean?

DYLAN. Can we get back to the point please.

JESS. What? That you're more comfortable with cancer than you are with IVF? This is the point. People know, not

people, one person, our friend and neighbour and you seem to see it as detrimental to your public image or something.

DYLAN. Stop putting words in my mouth. I got the wrong word. I said sorry.

JESS. Explain then. What does it matter if people know?

DYLAN. It's private.

JESS. So is our shitty bank balance but you chat to Phil and Kim about that often enough.

DYLAN. This is different.

JESS. How? How, Dylan? Oi!! Answer!! How?

DYLAN. It just is.

JESS. Not good enough.

DYLAN. I'm not getting into this.

JESS. Too late. How is it different?

DYLAN. This is the NHS's fault, Jess, not mine. They shouldn't stamp ACU on the box.

JESS lifts her shirt to show a collection of small ten-pence-piece-sized bruises on her stomach.

JESS. This earns me a better answer than that, Dylan. I am injecting the menopause into my belly every night. Answer the fucking question.

DYLAN. Because it's me, isn't it?

JESS. What is?

DYLAN. I'm a Jaffa and I don't want people knowing that.

JESS. A Jaffa?

DYLAN. Seedless.

JESS. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, Dylan, will you get your head out of the playground please?

DYLAN. It's private, Jess. We weren't at the conception of Emma the wonder baby, were we? So why do people need to be part of our life?

JESS. Firstly, I don't know if this is some pathetic attempt to claim some of this process for yourself or not but you are not seedless, you idiot. You have nineteen million sperm. Thirty-five per cent of which are sound and healthy and good to go. That is six million active, positive sperm you've got there and we need one. Just one. Secondly, this is bigger than your pride and until you realise that, we are going to find this majorly more difficult than it needs to be. There are bigger fights than this on the horizon, Dylan, and I can't have you curling up and crying at this one.

DYLAN. I don't want people talking about our fertility problems, Jess, that's all. I don't think that's unreasonable.

JESS. They already are! They've been talking about our fertility problems for years.

DYLAN. What are you talking about?

JESS. We are thirty-four years old, we've been married for five years and we don't have a child. They have been talking about it longer than we have. What you're actually saying is that you don't want people thinking that it's you with the problem. I mean, that's what you just said, isn't it? They don't. Relax, I wish they did but they don't. They think it's me. They will always think it's me. It's what people do. I met an editor last week, we chatted, it was nice, she booked me for an article, she showed me photos of her family, three boys all beautiful. All incredibly, painfully, heartbreakingly beautiful. I smiled and asked the right questions, she asked if I had children, I said no and she knew. Straight away, in that instant she fucking stone-cold, bottom-of-the-gut knew. Her eyes tightened, she shifted in her seat and she softened. Ever so slightly, ever so fucking slightly she softened towards me because she knew and she softened out of pity and my gut started to hurt, Dylan. I got actual physical pain where my womb is, Dylan, actual real pain as she pitied me. It hurt. It fucking hurt. People assume there is a problem, they do that and they will always assume that it's me so just don't worry about your little boy's manhood, Dylan, you're safe.

DYLAN. They shouldn't.

JESS. We do it. We do it all the time, why shouldn't they?

DYLAN. Because it's not fair.

JESS. NONE OF THIS IS FUCKING FAIR!!!! None of it! None of it! None of it! None of it! None of it!

DYLAN. Alright. Alright. Jesus, Jess. I'm sorry. Alright?

JESS has fire in her blood. A moment of tension. Everything is suspended. We just hear her breathing.

JESS. We need to be strong, Dylan.

DYLAN. We are.

JESS. Are we?

DYLAN. You are.

JESS. We both need to be strong. Solid strong. Tougher than ever because it's long. This is long and it needs fight from us both.

Beat.

From us both.

DYLAN. I know.

JESS. So fight.

DYLAN. I do. I fight all the time. It's tiring me out.

Pause.

Why are we doing this, Jess?

JESS. Sorry?

DYLAN. Nothing. I just... it's hard and it's hurting us and it makes us shout. I'm on my knees and everywhere I turn people are disappointed in me and it's pissing me off.

JESS. It's so much bigger than all of that.

DYLAN. Is it?

JESS. It's human, Dylan, it's that big. It's passing on your thoughts, your personality, a part of yourself, your fucking DNA. If we don't do that then what are we? We're void. We're not part of the story, we're just dust. We're just waste.

DYLAN. We've got each other, can't that be enough?

JESS. No.

DYLAN. Right. Lovely. That's nice to know.

Beat. JESS chooses her words.

JESS. You are not enough for me, Dylan.

DYLAN. What the hell does that mean?

JESS. It means that you are not enough. Just you, just us two on our own isn't enough. Nowhere near it.

Am I enough for you?

DYLAN. Yes.

JESS. This? What we have now, like we are? Our marriage is enough for you?

DYLAN. Yes. Of course.

JESS. You're lying.

DYLAN. I'm not.

JESS. You are. You have to be. It's not enough. It's not enough. It isn't. It's not enough for me.

DYLAN. Jesus Christ and I thought this was heavy before.

JESS. I'm really sorry, Dylan, but this is nothing. I love you so much. I do, I really, really do. You are kind and gentle and so much stronger than you will ever give yourself credit for. You are honourable and charming and you shame all other men with your decency but it's not enough. It's amazing, we amaze me all the time, we laugh so hard even through this but just us is not enough. There's something very obvious missing and you can hear it. There's a noise missing from this house and I can hear it all the time. The quiet deafens me. We won't last in this silence. We'll suffer and grow bad, we'll rot. I know we will.

I need a family, Dylan. I do. I do. I know I do. It's part of my fabric, it's woven into my essence. It's not a want, Dylan. It's a need. It's not an accessory I'm after it's a family and it's consuming me from the inside, Dylan. I should be able to have a fucking baby.

It's life and noise and everything. Everything. It's everything. It's absolutely everything.

Beat.

DYLAN. Right.

JESS. So we have to do whatever it takes. We have to do it together. If you're only half in this then I really need to know.

DYLAN. I'm not.

I understand.

I'm fully in.

JESS. Say it.

SAY IT TO ME!

DYLAN. You are not enough.

JESS. You have to mean that, Dylan.

DYLAN. I do. I do. You are not enough.

Jesus.

I feel useless.

JESS. You're doing so much. You are being brilliant but hiding it isn't helping either of us.

Beat. Things settle. Stillness. We hear the silence.

DYLAN. Are we injecting tonight?

JESS. Yes.

DYLAN. I'll get the kit.

Scene Eleven**Some days later**

JESS *is sat at the kitchen table. She has the injection kit laid out in front of her. Tentatively she draws up the fluid and self-injects. It's difficult but she manages it. She places the syringe in a sharps box.*

Silence.

She starts to speak to someone who isn't there.

JESS. I saw a magpie today. Just one. I've never been superstitious. Never really. Some people are and that's cool, that's interesting. Some people really go for it, they live by it. Superstition. It's all just fear though. Fear of having no control, fear of surprise. It's fear and the need to blame. The need for it not to be their fault if something bad happens. The need to hand over the responsibility. It's just fear.

I saw a magpie today and it felt as though my heart stopped.

It felt as though ice was inside me. Like ice was in my soul or my core, like ice was in my blood or something. It felt like ice had stopped me for a minute.

And I knew it was just a bird. I knew that. I knew that it was a random bird following a random impulse to fly and land. I knew it was random but it felt like ice. It felt like a message. Like a message from you. Like you were sending me a message about hope and about not relying on it. It felt loaded. It felt real. Very, properly real and it felt like ice in my womb. I saw a magpie today and it felt like ice and I thought of you and it made me scared and it made me wish you were here.

Sorry.

She checks herself. She breathes.

It made me scared about what we are going to do. About it not... actually... working.

Scene Twelve**Roughly four weeks later – the trigger shot**

JESS and DYLAN *sit in silence. The clock ticks but other than that there is no sound in their flat. After a while the distant sound of a baby crying can be heard from the flat upstairs.*

DYLAN. Talk me through it one more time.

JESS. We do the trigger shot tonight. It sends my ovaries into mega-spin and should create lots of eggs. Thirty-six hours later the eggs are ready and we go in. You wank, they knock me out, they drain my ovaries and they collect some eggs. Lots and lots of eggs. We hand everything over to them. We pray to the goddess of procreation that some of them are mature and able to fertilise and then they phone us one day at a time to tell us how many have survived. We pray some more and if there's some left at day five then we put one back where it belongs. Clear?

DYLAN. Sort of. Is it time?

JESS. Nearly.

DYLAN. I'm stressing out. What if I spill it?

JESS. You won't, you're great at this.

DYLAN. But –

JESS. You're great at this. We do this together. We do it all together.

DYLAN. Yeah. Of course.

JESS. You'll be fine. Just snap it off, be careful and we'll be fine. You haven't spilled any before.

DYLAN. I know but this one matters.

JESS. They all matter. It's the last one, that's all. We might never have to do this again.

Beat.

This is how our baby is made. You have to be part of it.

DYLAN. Is it time?

JESS *doesn't respond. After another minute of waiting, JESS looks at DYLAN. He gets the trigger shot from the fridge and opens the box. He takes out the glass vial. He stops, breathes, collects himself. He snaps off the top and gently, carefully places it on the table. As he draws the fluid up into a syringe, JESS ices her stomach. He passes her the needle. She injects. He plunges.*

JESS. Please. Please. Please.

DYLAN *holds her. She hangs on to him. The baby continues to cry.*

Scene Thirteen

Two days later – coming home from egg collection

DYLAN *and JESS enter from the outside world. They move through the lobby and into their flat. DYLAN supports JESS who is weak and unsteady on her feet. She reaches the sofa and curls up. She is in pain. She is shaken and affected and knocked.*

DYLAN. Tea?

JESS. Thanks.

He fills the kettle and flicks it on. His phone rings. He looks at the display and tightens as he sees that it's TONY calling. He ignores it.

JESS. Answer it.

DYLAN. No.

JESS. It's fine.

DYLAN. It can wait.

It stops ringing. He finds mugs, tea bags and milk. His phone starts to ring again.

JESS. Answer it, Dylan, it's pissing me off.

He does.

DYLAN. Hello. Hi... I'm in a meeting... No it wasn't booked in the log it came in late... I'll email you later... I can't make that... Because I'm here... No... No... No... Tomorrow, hopefully... Yes... Bye.

He hangs up. He shakes it off.

Right. Tea.

He pours the tea and gives a mug to JESS. He sits.

How are you feeling?

JESS. Sore.

DYLAN. You did brilliantly.

JESS. Dylan.

DYLAN. Six is good.

JESS. Six is below average.

DYLAN. We've got six eggs. That's six chances.

JESS. Until tomorrow. What if they don't survive? What if they don't fertilise?

DYLAN. They will. We just have to wait until tomorrow. But today is a good day, so let's just have today.

JESS. Right. Definitely. I need to sleep.

DYLAN helps her up and supports her to the bedroom. He returns to the lounge and sits. He stares into space. His phone rings.

Scene Fourteen**The next morning – learning how many have been fertilised**

DYLAN and JESS are sat at the kitchen table. Silence. Stillness. Tension. The house phone rings. DYLAN answers. JESS stands and paces.

DYLAN. Hello... Yes... Dylan Baxter. Yes... I understand... yes... thank you. Thank you so much for everything.

He hangs up.

Five.

JESS. Really?

DYLAN. Five fertilised. Four are top-quality, one hasn't separated but looks like it might do later and one isn't viable at all. So we've got five. Five embryos. Five little lives.

JESS. So one died?

DYLAN. It was non-viable.

JESS. Okay. Thank you.

DYLAN. What for?

JESS. Everything. Answering. Being calm. Being here. Saying the right words.

DYLAN. Five is good. Five is good.

JESS. They just need to be alive tomorrow.

DYLAN. They will be.

JESS. Jesus. I hate that they are in a lab somewhere. It feels wrong. I'm scared. I want to be with them. Is it weird if I go there?

DYLAN. A bit.

JESS. Our children are in a Petri dish. That's mental. What if someone drops it?

DYLAN. They won't.

JESS. But –

DYLAN. Today is a good day. I need to get to work.

JESS. Really?

DYLAN. I'll call you later. I love you.

He gathers his things. They hug each other she doesn't want him to go. He leaves. JESS sits for a moment. She allows the fact that they have five embryos to sink in. After a little while she starts talking to someone who isn't there.

JESS. Hello?

Sorry not to chat for a while. It's been difficult. Difficult to imagine you recently. You've been a bit vague since they took you away.

Hello. I miss you.

You feel very far away at the minute. I know I promised to bring you here but it's hard. It's harder than I thought it would be.

I will. I promise that I'll try but I'm just not very strong at the minute. There's a distance in my stomach since they took you out and kept you. If you can hear me, you need to grow. I promise to do everything I can but you need to do this. You need to grow. I can't do that for you. Whichever one you are, you need to grow. Get strong and grow. We are doing everything that we can. We are doing so much but it's your bit now and you need to grow and get strong and grow. That's your job. Until they give you back to us and then I'll take over again.

I love you.

Grow.

Scene Fifteen**The next morning**

DYLAN *and* JESS *are sat at the kitchen table. Silence. Stillness. Time suspended. The phone rings. DYLAN answers. JESS paces, unable to deal with the tension.*

DYLAN. Hello... Yes... Dylan Baxter... Right... Fine...
Good... Thank you... Bye.

JESS. Good? I heard the word good.

DYLAN. Still five. They all survived. Three top-quality and two very good.

She breathes.

JESS. I can't take this.

DYLAN. You're doing brilliantly, Jess. Just hang on.

JESS. They just need to keep going. They just need to be there tomorrow.

DYLAN. Today is a good day.

JESS. What time are you home?

DYLAN. The usual. You'll be fine. Rest. Kim's upstairs, call her down for a coffee, she'll be thrilled. I love you.

He kisses her and exits. She sits, helpless.

Scene Sixteen**The same day**

KIM. Fucking hell.

JESS. I know.

KIM. But fucking hell.

JESS. It's okay, Kim, we're fine.

KIM. Why didn't you tell me?

JESS. Because you already knew.

KIM. What?

JESS. Come on.

KIM. Yeah, okay, I googled the shit out of it after that delivery but why didn't you tell me?

JESS. It's been weird.

KIM. What are the chances?

JESS. Twenty-seven per cent.

KIM. Oh my god! Oh my god that's nothing! Shit, sorry.
I mean, that's decent, you'll be fine. I'm so sorry.

JESS. It's fine. I know it's not great but it works. People get babies this way. It works and it's not working for us any other way so we have to try.

KIM. Can I do anything?

JESS. Chatting has helped. I might not shout about it too much though. Even if it works there are no guarantees and Dylan's a bit weird about people knowing, so don't tell Phil.

Beat.

He already knows, doesn't he?

KIM. A bit, yeah. I wouldn't worry though, some days I'm not even sure he knows that we've got a baby so anybody else's aren't really on his radar.

I'm sad for you, Jess.

JESS. Please don't be.

KIM. It's not fair.

JESS. No.

Pause.

KIM. I'm sorry that I've got Emma.

JESS. Kim.

KIM. I know that sounds stupid but I feel guilty that I've got something you want so badly.

JESS. Please don't say that.

KIM. I had no idea how much you had to do. I can't believe you inject yourself, I'd never be able to do that.

JESS. It's not that bad.

KIM. I'll pray for you.

JESS. What?!

KIM. We've been going to church, Emma's getting christened and they make you go. I'll pray for you next time.

JESS. Thanks. That's... great.

KIM. No worries.

Beat.

I need to go.

JESS. Okay.

KIM. Emma needs... Sorry.

JESS. You can talk about her, it's fine.

KIM. She needs feeding.

JESS. You can do that here. You've fed her here before.

KIM. Nah, I'll take her up, I should get back.

JESS. Okay.

KIM gathers her things, as she picks up Emma's Moses basket a small, cuddly toy falls to the floor, unseen by both.

KIM. Let me know if you need anything. I'll be here.

JESS. Sure thing. Bye then.

KIM. Bye.

KIM leaves. JESS turns and notices the toy. She looks at it in her flat. She picks it up. She smells it. She holds onto it.

Scene Seventeen

The next morning

DYLAN *and* JESS *are sat at the kitchen table. Silence. Stillness. Time suspended. The phone rings. DYLAN answers. JESS paces unable to deal with the tension.*

DYLAN. Hello... Yes... Dylan Baxter... Oh!... Right... That's fine... Sure... Thank you. Bye.

DYLAN. Three.

JESS. What happened to the others?

DYLAN. Non-viable.

JESS. Oh my god.

DYLAN. We've got three, we'd have taken that on Monday.

They want us to go in on Friday at 8 a.m. to put two back and freeze one.

Two days. Two days and they'll be back where they belong. Shit. This is crazy. This is beyond anything I've ever known.

JESS. Stay here today.

DYLAN. I can't.

JESS. You should have told work. They'd have given you some space.

DYLAN. They wouldn't.

JESS. They might.

DYLAN. They wouldn't.

JESS. Stay.

DYLAN. I'll be back soon. I'll show my face and say that I've got a meeting. I'll be back before you know it.

JESS. Tell them.

DYLAN. It's fine. I promise.

Scene Eighteen**That day**

DYLAN's office. *He is typing. He feels bright and productive and is working hard.* TONY enters.

DYLAN. Morning.

TONY. Alright, mate?

Silence. TONY stands still and stares at DYLAN.

DYLAN. What?

TONY. What?

DYLAN. Tony?

TONY. HR?

DYLAN. What about them?

TONY. You.

DYLAN. What?

TONY. Mate, you went to HR.

DYLAN. Yeah, it was personal.

TONY. But why did you go to those wankers before me? They hate me as it is.

DYLAN. I need some time off.

TONY. Use the log.

DYLAN. I don't want to use the log. That's why I went to HR. They shouldn't have told you.

TONY. Well, they did.

DYLAN. They were meant to bypass you and just give me the time. I asked them to do that.

TONY. Well, they didn't bypass me, they went straight through me. What's all this going behind my back, mate?

DYLAN. It's not behind your back.

TONY. Well, it is.

DYLAN. I'm sorry.

TONY. Are you?

DYLAN. Look, I just don't want to use the log.

TONY. Don't work here then.

DYLAN. Jesus.

TONY. No, mate. I'm sorry but it's what we do – did. It's the job you applied for. It was good enough then but all of a sudden you don't like it, you kick up a fuss and I have to spend the rest of the week and the best part of the weekend rewriting our privacy policy. A policy that worked really well for everyone else in this building apart from you. So you go crying to HR and all of a sudden I'm snow-blind with work.

DYLAN. Sorry.

TONY. Good. You need to be. I've got Tanya cancelling our plans for the weekend. She is not happy with you.

DYLAN. Sorry.

TONY. I heard you.

DYLAN. I mean it.

TONY. Yeah. Forget it. It'll get done. Just bloody talk to me next time, I could have sorted it.

DYLAN. I will.

Beat.

TONY. Is everything... y'know... alright though?

DYLAN. Yeah.

TONY. I'm just asking because I give a shit about you, you don't have to tell me details.

DYLAN. I'm fine. Everything's fine.

TONY. Are you sure?

DYLAN. Totally.

TONY. Good because Spain have been on.

DYLAN. What?

TONY. Barcelona. You were good. They liked you. Concise they said. They used that word. Concise. Apparently they like concise in Spain because they want you back.

DYLAN. When?

TONY. The twenty-first.

DYLAN *works out the date in relation to the IVF cycle.*

DYLAN. Okay. That should be fine.

TONY. For a month.

DYLAN. No chance.

TONY. Mate.

DYLAN. It's too long.

TONY. It isn't, we'll cover it, we'll be fine, I've sorted it.

DYLAN. I have personal commitments. I'm not able to go.
Sorry.

TONY. That's something that you might need to take up with HR, mate.

DYLAN. Tony.

TONY. I'm sorry, Dylan, but that's how it is. This is the job. It happens, it's not ideal for anyone. You've got two weeks, it's enough time to arrange things. It's Barcelona, Dylan, it's not Shit City. I got Norway for three weeks in January and I took it. It was dark and cold and nobody spoke English. Fucking suicide central out there and it's easy to see why. You got a five per cent Brucie Bonus and Barcelona in the sun. My advice is take it and don't cause a fuss. Make whatever personal shit you have in your life go away and pack a case. Take Jess with you, she'll love it, proper little break. Or don't. If that's the issue. Maybe that's what you need, a little Dylan time.

DYLAN. Give it a rest.

TONY. Mate, I don't like this, it's depressing walking into your office but I'm passing on information that I think you'd like

to know. I don't need to do this. I don't need to pass it on. I could just email the ticket and leave it at that. But like I said I give a shit about you, you're my mate. So, I'm sorry if I'm being an arsehole about it but it's my job and I try to do it the best I can. I thought you might want a heads-up. Because I'm a nice bloke. I thought you might like to know. It's you, it's how it is. It's just how it is.

TONY *exits.* DYLAN *folds.* *He holds onto the edge of his desk. He is hanging on.*

Scene Nineteen

Two weeks later

JESS *and* DYLAN *'s house.* *It's four in the morning, JESS and DYLAN are in the kitchen.*

JESS. They said the first wee of the day.

DYLAN. Do it then.

JESS. I can't.

DYLAN. Whatever happens –

JESS. Don't.

DYLAN. What?

JESS. Let's just... I don't want to talk.

DYLAN. Do you want to do it then?

JESS. I can't.

DYLAN. It'll be okay, Jess. It's time.

JESS *picks up the pregnancy test and exits into the bathroom.* DYLAN *paces.* JESS *returns.* *She puts the test down and moves away from it.*

How long?

JESS. Two minutes.

DYLAN *sets the timer on his phone to two minutes and places it next to the test. He steps away.*

Beat.

Will you look?

DYLAN. Me?

JESS. I can't. I'm too scared.

DYLAN. Yeah, sure, okay.

JESS. I'm scared.

DYLAN. Two minutes. We'll know in two minutes.

They wait. Silence. Tension. Two minutes pass.

The timer sounds.

Without speaking, DYLAN crosses to the test. He picks it up. A weight grows within him. There is ice in her blood.

JESS. What does it say?

She already knows. He looks at her.

DYLAN. It says no.

Silence. Stillness. Neither of them knows what to do.

Eventually DYLAN moves to the stereo and puts some music on. 'Grow Old With Me' by Tom Odell plays. He moves to JESS and touches her. She resists. She rejects him and turns away. Tentatively he persists, pulling her nightie, tugging on her arm. Gently working a way in. Eventually she turns and softens slightly. She is hurting but they hold each other. Softly, very small at first they start to sway and then they start to dance. It's personal and small and meant. It's gentle and clumsy at first, small movements together. Gradually it develops into a piece of choreography; their first dance at their wedding maybe. They dance and smile. It's tender and theirs and full of need. It's all they can do in this moment. As the music builds, JESS becomes charged. The dance becomes urgent and angry and like a fight. Something is building within her. Suddenly she breaks away as the music

swells and becomes very loud. She is hurting and volatile and violent. She dances on her own, she hits things, she breaks something and screams. She punches her stomach. She shouts the words 'I can't' as the dance becomes a violent primal release. It's a primitive, feminine pain that she feels as DYLAN falls still. The music stops. We hear them breathing.

JESS. I Can't.

DYLAN. Jess.

JESS. I can't.

I can't.

I can't.

Shouting.

I CAN'T.

Screaming.

I CAN'T!!!!

They stand apart. Breathing.

Scene Twenty

Some days later

DYLAN and JESS are in the hallway. He has a suitcase with him.

DYLAN. I don't want to go.

JESS. It'll be fine.

DYLAN. It's too long.

JESS. It's perfect.

DYLAN. How is me going to Spain for a month perfect?

JESS. We need this time. I'm tired now, Dylan, really tired and a bit sore and so are you. I can see it. Go to Spain, eat nice

food, drink some fucking wine for Christ's sake and come back happy.

DYLAN. You make it sound like a holiday.

JESS. It's perspective. It's what we need. I'll be fine. I'll do the same. I'll get pissed with Kim and eat crap food, she'll love it.

DYLAN. We should be doing those things together.

JESS. It's your job, Dylan. Life continues. Ours does.

DYLAN. Yeah.

JESS. I'll be here when you get back and then we can think about starting again. The one in the freezer is on ice. It's not going anywhere. It's the perfect time for you to go. Buy me something nice.

I love you.

DYLAN. Right. Bye then.

Scene Twenty-One

Some days later

JESS is alone in the flat, writing, listening to music. She stands and puts the kettle on, finds a mug and tea bag. She opens the fridge and realises there is no milk left. We also notice that the drugs have gone. She puts on shoes and a coat, turns the music off and is about to leave the flat when KIM enters the hallway from upstairs. She is carrying Emma. The sound stops JESS in her tracks. For the first time she doesn't want to see them. She waits. KIM puts Emma in the pram, cooing and chatting to her all the time. JESS hears it all. KIM leaves. JESS remains.

Scene Twenty-Two

Some days later

JESS is sat at her laptop. She is working, the typing is tight and focused and charged with something. There is a coldness to her now. KIM enters from the outside world and into the lobby, she is struggling with a pram. Emma is crying. JESS hears it and types harder, forcing herself to focus. The crying is loud. KIM calms her with mother-to-baby cooing noises. All this is heard by JESS. She stops typing. She sits. KIM takes Emma upstairs. JESS starts to speak to someone who isn't there.

JESS. Hello? Are you there?

She stops. She sits. Stillness.

Scene Twenty-Three

Some weeks later

JESS and DYLAN's flat is empty. KIM enters from the outside world with Emma. She is in a rush and struggles with the pram. She is clearly desperate for the toilet. She absent-mindedly leaves the front door open and knocks on JESS and DYLAN's door. After a few seconds of no reply she rushes upstairs leaving Emma in her pram in the hallway. After another few seconds JESS enters from the bathroom, wrapped in a towel, drying her hair. She walks to the front door and opens it. She sees Emma. She sees the open front door. She shouts outside.

JESS. Kim?!

Beat.

Kim?!

Beat.

After a few seconds and no response JESS takes Emma out of the pram and goes back into her flat. She shuts the door behind her. The front door is still left open. JESS stands and

holds Emma. She looks at her. She doesn't know what she is going to do. We watch this for some time before KIM re-enters from upstairs. It takes a few moments for her to fully digest that Emma isn't in the pram. Genuine confusion. A real sense of 'this can't be happening, it doesn't make sense', before panic starts to rise. She looks at JESS and DYLAN's door but has already tried this. She knows that they aren't there. She sees the open front door. More panic. She rushes out. JESS continues to look at Emma.

Hello.

Scene Twenty-Four

That evening

The pram has been moved into JESS and DYLAN's flat. DYLAN enters from the outside world. He pulls a suitcase behind him. He enters the flat.

DYLAN. Jess!

Jess!

JESS enters from the bedroom.

JESS. Shhhh!

DYLAN. Hello.

JESS. Hi.

They greet each other. They hug. They kiss.

Welcome back. It's so good to see you. How was the flight?

DYLAN. Fine.

JESS. How are you?

DYLAN. Good. It's done and I'm never going back. How are you?

JESS. Fine.

DYLAN. Sure?

JESS. Positive. I feel good. I feel strong.

DYLAN. Good. Great. That's great.

JESS. I've missed you.

DYLAN. Yeah you too.

JESS. Wine?

DYLAN. Definitely.

She breaks from him and pours him a glass of wine.

DYLAN notices the pram.

What's that?

JESS. What?

DYLAN. That pram?

JESS. That's a pram.

DYLAN. Right, and why have we got it?

JESS. It's Emma's.

DYLAN. Why's it here?

JESS. She's in the bedroom.

DYLAN. Who?

JESS. Emma.

DYLAN. Is she? Okay. Why?

JESS. She's asleep.

DYLAN. Why is she here though?

JESS. Kim dropped her off.

DYLAN. Right. Cool. Really?

JESS. Yes.

DYLAN. And you're okay with it?

JESS. Fine.

DYLAN. Okay. Good. What else have I missed?

JESS. Nothing really. Just work. Y'know, the norm. Will you have to go back?

DYLAN. They'll want me to but I'm done. Someone else can go.

Beat.

Where's Kim gone then?

JESS. I don't know. Out.

DYLAN. Out?

JESS. Yeah. Out.

DYLAN. How long has Emma been here?

JESS. A couple of hours.

DYLAN. When will she be back?

JESS. I don't know. What's the issue?

DYLAN. No issue. Just asking. I thought we could go out for dinner that's all. We haven't seen each other for a month.

But if we've got her for a while then we can't. No issue.

JESS. I'm not sure.

DYLAN. Okay. Have we got enough stuff?

JESS. Stuff? What sort of stuff?

DYLAN. I don't know, baby stuff. Food, milk, that sort of stuff.

JESS. I don't know. Probably. No.

DYLAN. No?

JESS. She went out in a rush.

DYLAN. Did she?

JESS. Yeah.

DYLAN. And she didn't leave any stuff?

JESS. No.

DYLAN. Why?

JESS. I don't know. I think there might have been an emergency or something.

DYLAN. What sort of emergency?

JESS. I don't know.

DYLAN. Is everyone okay?

JESS. Yeah. Everyone's fine.

DYLAN. But there was an emergency.

JESS. There must have been, I don't know. I was in the shower.

DYLAN. When?

JESS. When she knocked.

DYLAN. I'm not following you.

JESS. Stop questioning me then. Everything's fine, Dylan.

DYLAN. Sorry. You said emergency that's all. Sorry.

JESS. Kim dropped her off.

DYLAN. When you were in the shower?

JESS. Yes, she knocked and left her outside.

DYLAN. Are you being serious?

JESS. For fuck's sake, Dylan, why are you being like this?

DYLAN. Like what?

JESS. Inquisitive.

DYLAN. Because that's a weird thing to do, to leave your baby without leaving food and stuff.

JESS. I agree. It is. She knocked but I was in the shower. I came out and she'd left her in the hall so I brought her in.

DYLAN. Have you tried phoning her?

JESS. No. Not yet.

DYLAN. Why not?

JESS. Because I've been with Emma.

DYLAN. Right. Maybe we should do that.

JESS. She left her in the hall.

DYLAN. You said that.

JESS. So stop acting like I've done something wrong.

DYLAN. I'm not. I just think maybe we should phone her to make sure everything's okay.

DYLAN's phone rings.

Call Kim.

He answers.

Tony, hi... Yes, literally five minutes ago... It was fine... Can we talk about this tomorrow please?... I have just walked through the door... I'll be in tomorrow... Yes... I will... Of course I will... Can I have ten minutes at least... I'll call you back... Thank you... Ten minutes... Bye.

He hangs up.

Call Kim.

Why don't you want to call Kim?

JESS. I don't know.

DYLAN. What's going on, Jess?

JESS. Nothing.

DYLAN. Call her then.

JESS. You fucking call her if it matters so much to you.

DYLAN dials KIM's number.

DYLAN. Kim. Hi, it's Dylan... I've just got back now. Are you okay? Is everything... Right, yeah, listen to me, we've got her... Jess is with her... she's fine, she's been with her for a couple of hours... I don't know... She was in the hall... I don't know... Okay... Sure... I don't know I have just walked through the door... We'll be here... Bye.

He hangs up.

Beat.

She was at the police station.

JESS. What? Why?

DYLAN. Because she thought someone had taken Emma.

JESS. What?

DYLAN. She sounded fucking terrified. What's going on, Jess?

JESS. Nothing's going on. She knocked. By the time I got there she'd gone out. Emma was in the hall and the door was open. What was I supposed to do? Leave her?

DYLAN. Call her.

JESS. I didn't want to disturb her. I thought there'd been an emergency.

DYLAN. There had, her fucking baby was missing.

JESS. This is bullshit.

DYLAN. What's going on, Jess?

JESS. Nothing is going on. What does that mean, 'What's going on?'

DYLAN. I'm just trying to get a handle on things.

JESS. A handle on things? There's nothing to get a handle on.

DYLAN. It's just odd.

JESS. Is it?

DYLAN. What's been going on, Jess?

JESS. Nothing has been 'going on'. Stop saying that, you said it again. Stop insinuating. It was a mistake. Obviously.

DYLAN. Yeah?

JESS. YES! What, do you think I stole her baby? Is that what you are actually insinuating? Is that what you aren't man enough to say to my face? Is that what you are trying to get a handle on? You think I'm that messed up and desperate that I stole our friend's baby? Answer me, Dylan. Is that what you think?

DYLAN. I'm concerned.

JESS. Concerned about what? Say it!

DYLAN. I'm concerned that might have happened. That you might have... taken her.

JESS. Jesus Christ. You're concerned. I don't believe this. Fuck you.

DYLAN. I have just walked through the door and I'm thrown into a national situation. Kim was with the police, Jess. You'll have to make a statement.

JESS. Fine! Good! I'll state how Kim left her child in the hall with the front fucking door open. She's lucky I was in! She's lucky nobody did take the child. I'll state facts. Facts. I'm not lying here, Dylan. This is unbelievable. This is raw, Dylan. This is like an open wound here. Do you know what you are doing with this?

DYLAN. Calm down.

JESS. Calm down? Calm down? You think that I have the capability to steal a child. Fuck you. Proper hero work, Dylan. Jesus Christ it's nice to know that you rate me with such distinction, Dylan. It's nice of you to show your true colours finally.

DYLAN. What was I supposed to think?

JESS. I don't know. Maybe that I was telling the truth. Maybe that the woman you've been with for ten years is actually a decent person who doesn't commit criminal acts. Maybe think that I'm mentally fucking sound. Any of the above.

DYLAN. Kim was worried.

JESS. She shouldn't have left her baby in the hall then.

Beat.

DYLAN. This isn't justified, Jess.

JESS. What?

DYLAN. You sound righteous.

JESS. And you sound like a dick.

DYLAN. Jess.

JESS. Piss off.

DYLAN. You think she deserves this?

JESS. No.

DYLAN. That's why you didn't call her, isn't it?

JESS. Piss off back to Spain, Dylan.

DYLAN. You think this is justified action, don't you?

JESS. I don't know what you're talking about. What is that? Justified action? Have you been reading John Grisham again?

DYLAN. How would this have played out, Jess?

JESS. Played out? What? You're speaking in clichés, Dylan. I can't understand you.

DYLAN. What were you going to do?

WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO DO? What was your plan? Put Emma back in the hall when you felt that Kim had suffered enough? You couldn't keep her. How long is long enough, Jess. HOW LONG?

JESS. SHE LEFT HER IN THE HALL!

DYLAN. AND YOU TOOK HER IN! You didn't call. You didn't try to give her back. That's the issue, Jess. Nothing else. You didn't try to give her back because you wanted to punish someone. Didn't you? You wanted to punish someone with a baby. That's the truth, isn't it? You want justice for your infertility.

JESS. How fucking dare you say that. That is not true. That is not true. I don't know you.

DYLAN's phone rings.

Answer it. Answer it and go back to Spain where people want you.

He lets it ring. It stops. Silence. JESS's words are clear and calculated and chosen.

I want a baby, Dylan. I want one more than you could possibly ever imagine. More than I thought I could ever want anything. So much so that it hurts me. It causes me actual physical pain. So much pain that I talk to the imaginary image of it to stop that pain. I do that. I talk out loud to the distant, empty image of our future child. That's how much I want our baby. MY baby! Not any baby, Dylan. Not one I found in the rubbish. I want ours and I can't have ours. We can't have the one thing

that other people just leave lying around. You think I'm trying to generate some sort of justice? You think that's what I'm doing? You're wrong. You're so fucking wrong. I brought her in here because it was the right thing to do. Because she had been left. Alone. What happened after that, why I did or didn't do things is between me and my belief in what is right and wrong. You can think whatever you want. I don't care. I honestly don't fucking care.

Emma starts to cry.

DYLAN. Jess.

DYLAN's phone starts to ring.

JESS. Answer your phone, Dylan. It might be important.

JESS exits to the bedroom. DYLAN is still. His phone rings.

Scene Twenty-Five

The next day

JESS is sat at the kitchen table. She sits in silence and eventually starts to talk to someone who isn't there.

JESS. You're not there. I know you're not there. You never were. You are more distant now than you have ever been and you were never actually there. I could feel you, I know that as a memory but not as a sensation. Not any more. I can't feel you any more. I can't see you. I can't sense you. I have no hope. I have no hope. It's over. We tried to bring you here. I tried. I did. I tried very hard. I know it takes time and I know it's hard. People told me this, people said that it would be hard but good things are hard to come by. I know. I know but people don't know. They don't know how hard it is. You've gone. The feeling of you has gone and I can't get it back. I don't know what to do any more. It's vacancy. It's just emptiness. It's just a void. You are that space inside me that has no use. You are devoid of function. You are waste. You are silent and cold and nothingness. You are nothingness.

Complete and absolute. Nothingness. You are the thing that will never be. You are my broken hope.

Goodbye.

Scene Twenty-Six

Some weeks later

DYLAN's office. He is sat staring into space. TONY enters.

TONY. Knock knock knock. Busy?

DYLAN. I was thinking.

TONY. Good. That's really good.

DYLAN. Is it?

TONY. I don't know. Probably. It must be.

DYLAN. I'm not following you.

TONY. Fucking Midas or something aren't you? Fucking turning things to solid gold over in España Cataluña. They love you. Ruby doesn't, she's gutted. 'Should've been me' and all that.

DYLAN. What are you talking about?

TONY. Opportunities, mate, proper big ones.

DYLAN. What opportunities?

TONY. It's rolling in from over there.

DYLAN. That's great.

TONY. Turns out you're fluent in the lingo and all that. You kept that quiet.

DYLAN. Not really. I just picked up what I needed. I'm really busy, Tony. Can I just crack on?

TONY. Busy with what?

DYLAN's computer is off and desk is empty.

DYLAN. I was thinking.

TONY. This is exactly what I mean.

DYLAN. Tony –

TONY. We need to talk.

Beat.

Gordon.

He lets it sink in.

This comes straight from Gordon. He's going to call you in and he's going to make you an offer.

DYLAN. What sort of offer?

TONY. He's going to offer you a promotion.

DYLAN. I don't want one.

TONY. You do. You will.

DYLAN. I won't. I'm fine as I am.

TONY. You will when I tell you that it's in Spain. I am not meant to tell you this so you need to act surprised and shocked. Like now, like you look now, all confused. I've been told to prime you but not to tell you. This is priming.

DYLAN. But I don't want to go to Barcelona, Tony.

TONY. Okay, well, think about it.

DYLAN. I don't need to. I have a life here. I can't move my wife to Barcelona.

TONY. Yeah. You need to think about that because it's coming. Gordon wants it.

DYLAN. Thanks for the priming, Tony. Can I get back to work please?

TONY. Sure. Crack on. Think away.

Beat.

Some people would kill for this opportunity, you know?

DYLAN. Then give it to them. Let Ruby go.

TONY. Stop it, mate. You need to remember where you are.

That's not how it works and you know it. It's you, Dylan. They know you, you worked really hard on this, they like you. From the outside it looks like this is what you want. Unbelievably they describe someone very passionate out there. I don't know, Dylan, maybe you're really good at it, maybe this is what you need, maybe this is the answer.

I haven't asked about what's going on with you. I didn't want to hassle you, I thought – he'll chat if he wants to, he knows I'm good for it if he needs a shoulder.

It looks heavy though, mate, it makes you bloody hard to manage, makes you hard to be around. I'm just being very honest, that's all. But interestingly the work hasn't dipped, mate. It's improved. You earned this. I mean that. Some people go their whole lives without an opportunity. Not one. They just work and live and crack on and then they stop.

It's that over there, with that life, with sun and siestas and a fresh start, away from whatever it is that makes you think so much. Or it's this over here with this life and this situation and this.

Pause.

How happy are you, Dylan?

DYLAN. Tony –

TONY. I don't want an answer. I just want you to think about it. Seriously, mate. I mean it. I want you to gaze into the darkness of your silent, turned-off computer screen for as long as it takes and think about how happy you are? Really think about it. It's a good offer. It's a life-changer. If you want my advice, you'll do your thinking thing and then you'll say yes.

TONY *leaves*. DYLAN *stares into space*.

'Up the Bracket' by The Libertines plays, bridging the end of this scene with the start of the next.

Scene Twenty-Seven**Some days later**

JESS is sat at her computer, the music plays through her iPod, she has changed the position of the table so that her back is to the door. She is typing and working hard. There is a flow and creativity to her that is rhythmic. She is the opposite image to DYLAN in the previous scene. KIM enters from the outside world. She pushes Emma in a pram. Emma cries. JESS instinctively stands, moves away from the door and from the noise. We can see that it's getting to her. It's as if she is repelled by the sound of Emma crying. She breathes. She collects herself. She turns the music off. She listens to the baby crying. In a weird way it soothes her. KIM collects Emma and goes to exit upstairs. She stops and notices that the music has stopped. She waits to see if JESS will come out. They both want to connect but neither is brave enough to make the first move. JESS crosses to the door. She is about to open it but stops. Emma has stopped crying. The silence stops her.

Beat.

Silence.

KIM gives up and exits upstairs. JESS hears this and shifts slightly. She goes to a cupboard or drawer and takes out the soft toy that she has been keeping. She opens the door and climbs the stairs. Before getting to the top she stops and loses her nerve. She kisses the toy and leaves it on the stairs. She returns to the flat, turns the music back on and returns to work. The music continues and fades.

Scene Twenty-Eight**Some days later**

JESS is typing in silence. It's productive and passionate. There is a real energy to her that suggests she is producing good work. DYLAN enters from the outside world. He enters the flat and closes the door.

JESS. Well?

Beat.

DYLAN. Jess.

JESS. Just answer the question.

DYLAN. I said no.

Beat.

JESS stops typing.

JESS. Why?

DYLAN. Jess.

JESS. That's not an answer.

DYLAN. It is. It just depends on how you hear it.

JESS. It depends on how you say it and the way you said it was pleading and pathetic and soft.

DYLAN. This is still going on then?

JESS. Yep.

DYLAN. Great.

JESS. Isn't it just?

DYLAN. Because I love you. That's why I said no.

JESS. You should have said yes.

DYLAN. And because I'd be walking away from too much.

JESS. There's nothing left, Dylan.

DYLAN. There's the frozen one.

JESS. Jesus Christ. Shut up, Dylan.

DYLAN. No.

JESS. Seriously do. It's just that simple for you, isn't it? Just thaw it out, throw it up there and bingo.

DYLAN. No.

JESS. It means starting again, you know that? Frozen or not it means drugs and injections and sleepless nights. It means money, lots of money that we don't have, it means shame and embarrassment and acute, focused, sorrowful pain. But most of all it means hope, it means tonnes and tonnes more hope than we had last time, it needs us to ignore all of the pain of failure and to start again with hope and the knowledge that it's massively more likely to fail than to succeed. Enough hope to get us through that and we're not even surviving the last one. It's over. I can't.

DYLAN. We have to.

JESS. Do we?

DYLAN. Yes.

She snaps.

JESS. Shut up, Dylan!

DYLAN. No. I won't shut up. You've claimed all of this. You've taken it from me. You took it all at the start and left me nothing. I know what it means, I know all of it just as much as you do. I know it happens to you. I know you do the injecting and the scans and the tests. I know it's your body and your hormones and your fucking life that gets used and that's amazing. That is. It really is. But for every inch that process builds you up and makes you great it pulls me down, it emphasises my uselessness, it makes me impotent.

JESS. Stop, Dylan, before I totally ruin you.

DYLAN. You already have.

Beat.

I have no part in this. I wank. That's what I do. That's how you described my part in all this. I wank. That is how my child is made. That is the level of my involvement. I wank.

You get to hurt and bleed and dig deep. You get to grieve and consult and be consoled. You get to fight and feel. I wank. You're right, I am pathetic, that is exactly what I am. It's how I've felt for months. Years. Until today. Until I said no. I said no. I said no because of you. Because of you and because of the one tiny frozen hope we have left. That frozen one is fifty per cent me and I have that amount of input into its future.

So I said no.

JESS. You should have said yes.

DYLAN. And you should turn around and look at me if you want to talk to me.

She turns.

JESS. You should have said yes.

DYLAN. I will never say yes. Not until this house is full of noise. Then I'll say yes. I'll say yes to anything and everything because yes is a positive word and there will be no negatives in that house. None at all. I love you, Jess. Fight with me. For the frozen one.

JESS. It's over, Dylan.

DYLAN. No it isn't. It only stops if we do.

JESS. I can't.

DYLAN. You can.

JESS. I can't imagine it. I've stopped seeing it. It's over.

DYLAN. I thought of that.

So I bought this.

He produces a tiny Babygro with the words 'I Love My Mummy' printed on the front.

We've got to try. For the one.

It could go either way for a second but JESS softens. She stands and moves towards him. Gently she curls into his arms.

We have to try.

They stay there for some time.

JESS. We'll try.

DYLAN. Seriously?

JESS. Just promise me one thing.

DYLAN. Anything.

JESS. That you don't buy any more comedy Babygros.

DYLAN. Are you kidding? Look at these.

He produces many more, all with comedy slogans printed on the front. She despairs. He milks the moment. They both laugh and reconnect and play.

Scene Twenty-Nine

Some weeks later – mid-cycle

'Rosanna's Song' by Merry Hell plays as DYLAN and JESS assume the now familiar positions at the table. They are different injections now. This time they use pre-mixed Clexane syringes. It's more relaxed than before. DYLAN eats and they chat underneath the music. The music continues as the lights fade.

Scene Thirty

The next evening

The music continues to play as DYLAN and JESS sit at the table. Again she takes a pre-mixed Clexane syringe from a box and injects. They kiss. The music continues as the lights fade.

Scene Thirty-One

Some days later – evening – they have just injected

JESS and DYLAN dance. It is intimate and needed. They hold on to each other. There is delicacy. There is intimacy. There is strength. The lights fade. The music stops.

Scene Thirty-Two

Several weeks later

JESS enters from the bedroom. She is dressed in a nightie and warm socks. She crosses and exits into the bathroom. DYLAN enters behind her from the bedroom and sits on the sofa. He waits. She re-enters from the toilet. She is holding a pregnancy test. She places it on the table and moves away from it. He presses go on the timer. Silence. Tension. Stillness. They can't look at each other.

DYLAN. Are you okay?

JESS. No.

Will you look?

DYLAN. Really?

JESS. I can't. I'm too... I just can't.

They wait.

Two minutes pass.

The timer sounds.

Blackout.

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